

DUTERTE'S LEGACY

THE TEN PILLARS OF
PROGRESS



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To the Filipino people, whose resilience and unwavering spirit
have shaped the course of our nation's history.

To President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, whose bold leadership and
relentless pursuit of change ignited the pillars of progress dis-
cussed in these pages.

To the countless men and women who stood behind the scenes,
working tirelessly for a better Philippines.

And to future generations, may this work serve as a reminder of
the complexities of governance and the enduring quest for na-
tional development.

May we continue to strive for a brighter, more prosperous to-
morrow.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to Duterte's Legacy

Overview of Duterte's Presidency

Rodrigo Roa Duterte's presidency, which began in June 2016 and concluded in June 2022, is often characterized by strong leadership and controversial policies. His administration focused on a series of ambitious reforms and initiatives that aimed to address longstanding issues in the Philippines, ranging from economic growth to infrastructure development. This subchapter provides an overview of Duterte's presidency, highlighting seven major achievements that stand out as significant contributions to the nation. These accomplishments not only define his administration but also shape the discourse surrounding his legacy.

One of Duterte's most notable achievements is the implementation of tax reform under Finance Secretary Sonny Dominguez. The Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law, along with subsequent measures, positioned the Philippines as one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia during Duterte's term. By providing substantial income tax cuts for the majority of Filipino taxpayers and generating increased revenue for social services and infrastructure, these reforms bolstered economic growth. The administration achieved a peak tax revenue of 16.1 percent of GDP in 2019, illustrating the effectiveness of these strategies in enhancing the economic landscape of the country.

In tandem with economic reforms, Duterte's "Build, Build, Build" program marked a transformative era in infrastructure development. Under the leadership of Department of Public Works and Highways Secretary Mark Villar, the administration invested over P6 trillion in infrastruc-

ture, elevating spending to an average of 5.14 percent of GDP. This initiative resulted in the construction of thousands of classrooms, bridges, and roads, significantly improving the country's infrastructure framework. By prioritizing these developments, Duterte aimed to create jobs, stimulate the economy, and enhance the quality of life for Filipinos through improved access to essential services.

The Duterte administration also made strides in transportation modernization, with significant improvements in mass transit systems and safety protocols. Department of Transportation Secretary Art Tugade oversaw the expansion of shipping routes and airport projects, including the transformation of Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) into one of the most improved airports globally. The construction of new terminals and enhancements to existing facilities catered to the growing demands of travelers, while efforts to modernize and upgrade transportation infrastructure underscored Duterte's commitment to making travel safer and more efficient for the public.

Another pillar of Duterte's legacy is the expansion of education access through the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, which provided free college education to millions of students. This legislative initiative aimed to democratize opportunities for higher learning, enabling 1.6 million individuals to benefit from tuition-free education by 2020. By addressing the financial barriers associated with tertiary education, the Duterte administration sought to empower the youth and promote a more educated workforce capable of contributing to national development.

Lastly, Duterte's foreign policy and health care initiatives have had lasting implications. His administration's pivot towards China, while maintaining ties with the United States, was a significant shift in diplomatic relations. Additionally, the implementation of the Universal Health Care Law expanded insurance coverage to 100 percent of the population, enhancing health infrastructure amid challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. These reforms reflect a multifaceted approach to

governance, emphasizing the importance of both international relations and domestic welfare.

In summary, Rodrigo Roa Duterte's presidency was marked by ambitious reforms and significant achievements that defined his administration. From tax reform and infrastructure development to transportation modernization and education access, these initiatives not only aimed to address pressing issues in the Philippines but also sought to lay a foundation for future growth and stability. As discussions about Duterte's legacy continue, these accomplishments will remain central to understanding his impact on the nation.



Defining the Ten Pillars of Progress

Defining the Ten Pillars of Progress involves a comprehensive examination of the key achievements during Rodrigo Roa Duterte's presidency that collectively encapsulate his administration's legacy. These pillars serve as benchmarks for assessing the transformative changes that occurred in various sectors, including the economy, infrastructure, education, transportation, foreign policy, governance, health care, crime reduction, environmental sustainability, and social services. Each pillar not only reflects a specific area of progress but also intertwines with the others, creating a holistic view of Duterte's impact on the Philippines.

The economic landscape of the Philippines underwent significant change under Duterte, primarily due to the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law. This initiative, spearheaded by Finance Secretary Sonny Dominguez, positioned the nation as one of Asia's fastest-growing economies. The reforms facilitated a reduction in income tax for many Filipinos while simultaneously raising funds for essential infrastructure and social services. This economic growth was further supported by the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act (CREATE), which provided substantial tax relief to businesses, particularly micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). These measures underscored the government's commitment to fostering a robust economic environment that benefited a broad spectrum of the population.

Infrastructure development emerged as another cornerstone of Duterte's administration, most notably through the ambitious Build, Build, Build program. Under the leadership of Department of Public Works and Highways Secretary Mark Villar, investments in infrastructure reached unprecedented levels, significantly surpassing the spending of previous

administrations. The program not only focused on the construction of roads, bridges, and classrooms but also aimed to modernize the nation's overall infrastructure landscape. By investing over P6 trillion in six years, the government made strides in enhancing connectivity and accessibility across the archipelago, thus laying the foundation for sustainable economic growth and improved quality of life for Filipinos.

Education reforms also played a critical role in defining Duterte's legacy, particularly with the implementation of the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act. By making college education free for millions of students, this initiative expanded access to higher education and provided crucial financial support through various scholarships. The impact of this policy was profound, with an increase in enrollment and graduation rates among Filipino students, thereby improving the overall educational landscape of the country. This commitment to education reflects a forward-thinking approach that recognizes the importance of a well-educated populace in driving national progress.

Duterte's foreign policy, characterized by a pivot towards China while maintaining relations with the United States, marked a significant shift in the Philippines' international standing. This independent foreign policy allowed for the return of historical artifacts, such as the Balangiga bells, while simultaneously navigating complex geopolitical waters. Simultaneously, efforts to reduce bureaucratic red tape and improve government service delivery were evident through the enactment of the Ease of Doing Business Act. These reforms aimed to streamline processes, making it easier for citizens and businesses to interact with government agencies, thereby fostering a more efficient and transparent governance model.

In summary, the Ten Pillars of Progress delineate a multifaceted approach to national development under Duterte's leadership. From economic reforms and infrastructure advancements to educational initiatives and foreign policy changes, each pillar reflects a commitment to enhancing the lives of Filipinos. Together, they illustrate the dynamic and

sometimes contentious journey of Duterte's presidency, providing valuable insights into the complexities of governance and the enduring impact of policy decisions on society.



Chapter 2: Tax Reform and Economic Growth

The Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law

The Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law, enacted on December 19, 2017, represents a significant milestone in the Duterte administration's economic strategy. Spearheaded by Finance Secretary Sonny Dominguez, the law aimed to overhaul the country's tax system to make it more equitable and efficient. By providing substantial income tax cuts for the majority of Filipino taxpayers, TRAIN was crafted to increase disposable income and consumer spending, thereby stimulating economic growth. This initiative not only sought to alleviate the financial burden on low- to middle-income earners but also aimed to generate additional revenue for the government to fund its ambitious infrastructure and social service programs.

One of the primary objectives of the TRAIN Law was to support the government's "Build, Build, Build" initiative, which focused on extensive infrastructure development across the Philippines. By raising additional funds through adjusted taxation, the law facilitated an unprecedented surge in infrastructure spending, with over PHP 6 trillion allocated during Duterte's six-year term. The increased funds helped finance critical projects, including the construction of roads, bridges, and public facilities, thereby laying the groundwork for improved connectivity and economic activity throughout the nation.

In addition to infrastructure funding, TRAIN also sought to modernize the country's taxation framework, aligning it with contemporary eco-

conomic realities. The law included provisions for higher excise taxes on certain goods, such as tobacco and alcohol, aiming to promote healthier lifestyles while also raising revenue. These measures contributed to the government's ability to achieve a record-high tax revenue as a percentage of GDP, reaching 16.1 percent in 2019. This achievement marked a notable increase from previous administrations, underscoring the effectiveness of the tax reforms in enhancing fiscal stability and funding essential government services.

The TRAIN Law also laid the foundation for subsequent tax reforms, including the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act (CREATE) signed into law in March 2021. This legislation aimed to provide substantial tax relief to businesses, particularly micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), thereby fostering a more conducive environment for investment and growth. By reducing the corporate income tax rate from 30 percent to 20 percent, CREATE not only eased the financial burden on businesses but also enhanced the country's attractiveness as an investment destination.

In summary, the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law stands as a pivotal achievement of the Duterte administration, reflecting a commitment to economic reform and development. By prioritizing tax equity, modernizing the tax system, and generating essential revenue for infrastructure and social programs, the TRAIN Law played a crucial role in positioning the Philippines as one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia during Duterte's presidency. Its impacts continue to resonate, influencing subsequent policy decisions and shaping the trajectory of the nation's economic landscape.



Impact of Tax Measures on Economic Growth

The impact of tax measures on economic growth during President Rodrigo Duterte's administration is a significant aspect of his legacy. Central to these efforts was the implementation of the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law, which came into effect on December 19, 2017. This law aimed to provide substantial income tax reductions for a majority of Filipino taxpayers, thereby increasing disposable income and stimulating consumer spending. By raising additional funds through the restructured tax system, the government was able to support essential infrastructure projects and social services, aligning with Duterte's ambitious "Build, Build, Build" program. This dual focus on tax reform and economic investment contributed to making the Philippines one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Duterte's administration saw a series of tax-related initiatives that collectively transformed the fiscal landscape of the country. The TRAIN Law was complemented by additional tax measures, including the Tax Amnesty Act and the Sin Tax Law, aimed at both enhancing revenue generation and promoting public health. By increasing taxes on tobacco and alcohol products, the government not only expanded its revenue base but also redirected public behavior towards healthier choices. These initiatives reflected a broader strategy to leverage tax policy as a tool for economic growth and improved societal outcomes, demonstrating a clear understanding of the interconnectedness of fiscal policy and public welfare.

The economic growth fostered by these tax reforms was evident in various sectors. The government's ability to invest in infrastructure develop-

ment—bolstered by tax revenues—resulted in significant improvements in transportation and public facilities. Under the leadership of Secretary Mark Villar, the "Build, Build, Build" program saw an unprecedented surge in infrastructure spending, with over P6 trillion allocated in six years. The improved infrastructure not only facilitated smoother logistics and transportation but also created jobs and stimulated local economies, further enhancing economic resilience. Thus, tax measures played a crucial role in financing these transformative projects, which were foundational to sustained economic growth.

Additionally, the economic environment fostered by these tax reforms led to improvements in the ease of doing business in the Philippines. The enactment of the Ease of Doing Business Act and the introduction of streamlined permit processes significantly reduced bureaucratic red tape. This made the Philippines a more attractive destination for both local and foreign investors, as evidenced by the registration of over 7.5 million business establishments from 2017 to June 2021. The combination of tax incentives and improved bureaucratic efficiency created a more favorable business climate, which is essential for long-term economic stability and growth.

In summary, the impact of tax measures under Duterte's administration cannot be overstated. The strategic implementation of the TRAIN Law and related tax reforms not only supported infrastructure development but also fostered an environment conducive to business growth. By prioritizing both revenue generation and public investment, Duterte's policies aimed to create a robust economic framework that benefitted a broad segment of the population. While challenges remain, the initial successes of these tax measures lay the groundwork for continued economic progress in the Philippines, demonstrating the vital role of effective fiscal policy in national development.



Achievements in Tax Revenue Collection

The achievements in tax revenue collection during President Rodrigo Duterte's administration reflect a substantial transformation in the Philippines' fiscal landscape. One of the cornerstones of this achievement was the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law, implemented in December 2017. This landmark legislation aimed to provide significant income tax reductions for the majority of Filipino taxpayers while simultaneously raising the necessary funds to support critical infrastructure and social services initiatives, most notably the ambitious “Build, Build, Build” program. The successful implementation of the TRAIN Law marked a pivotal moment in the Philippines' journey toward becoming one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia.

In addition to the TRAIN Law, Duterte's administration passed several key tax measures that collectively contributed to enhancing government revenue. The Tax Amnesty Act of February 2019 offered a unique opportunity for taxpayers to settle outstanding liabilities, which not only facilitated compliance but also generated additional funds for the government. Furthermore, the introduction of higher excise taxes on tobacco and alcohol products under the Tobacco Tax Law and the Sin Tax Law, respectively, aimed to promote public health while simultaneously increasing the government's revenue base. These measures were designed not just to raise funds but to encourage healthier lifestyle choices among Filipinos.

The impact of these tax reforms was evident in the notable increase in tax revenue as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). By 2019, the tax revenue reached an impressive 16.1%, significantly higher than the averages recorded during previous administrations. This surge in revenue allowed the government to finance essential projects and pro-

grams, thereby improving public services and infrastructure across the nation. The administration's commitment to fiscal discipline and effective tax collection strategies laid a solid foundation for sustainable economic growth, even in the face of challenges presented by external factors such as the global pandemic.

An essential aspect of the Duterte administration's tax revenue achievements was the modernization of revenue collection agencies. Efforts were made to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and other agencies, enabling them to better track compliance and minimize tax evasion. The introduction of the Central Business Portal streamlined the registration process for businesses, reducing wait times and facilitating compliance. This focus on improving bureaucratic processes not only benefited taxpayers but also fostered a more conducive environment for investment, ultimately attracting both local and foreign investors to the Philippine economy.

In conclusion, the achievements in tax revenue collection during the Duterte administration represent a significant aspect of his legacy. Through comprehensive tax reforms and the modernization of revenue collection systems, the government successfully enhanced its ability to fund critical infrastructure and social programs. These initiatives not only improved fiscal health but also contributed to the overall economic growth of the Philippines. As the country continues to navigate the post-pandemic landscape, the foundations laid during Duterte's presidency will play a crucial role in shaping the future of the nation's economic prospects.



Chapter 3: Build, Build, Build: Infrastructure Development

Overview of the Build, Build, Build Program

The "Build, Build, Build" program, a cornerstone of President Rodrigo Duterte's administration, represents a transformative approach to infrastructure development in the Philippines. Launched in 2017 under the leadership of Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Secretary Mark Villar, the initiative aimed to address the chronic underinvestment in infrastructure that had plagued the nation for decades. With a commitment to raise infrastructure spending to an average of 5.14 percent of GDP, the program not only sought to enhance physical infrastructure but also to stimulate economic growth and improve the quality of life for Filipinos across the archipelago.

Over the course of Duterte's six-year term, more than P6 trillion was allocated to infrastructure projects, a staggering investment that eclipsed the contributions of all previous administrations. This financial commitment facilitated the construction of essential facilities such as 145,000 classrooms, 2,000 school buildings, and 5,555 bridges, along with over 26,500 kilometers of roads, access roads, expressways, and tollways. The rapid pace of infrastructure development was unprecedented, with the DPWH achieving milestones that laid the groundwork for a more connected and accessible Philippines.

Key projects under the "Build, Build, Build" program included significant upgrades to transportation infrastructure, which were pivotal in modernizing the country's logistics and public transport systems. The

completion of major road networks and expressways significantly reduced travel times and improved accessibility to remote areas. This focus on infrastructure not only enhanced mobility but also catalyzed economic activities, particularly in regions that had previously been underserved by development initiatives. As a result, the program played a crucial role in elevating the Philippines' status as one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia during Duterte's presidency.

Moreover, the "Build, Build, Build" program was designed to create millions of jobs and stimulate local economies through direct and indirect employment opportunities. The construction boom contributed to a surge in demand for labor and materials, thereby invigorating various sectors of the economy. By prioritizing infrastructure development, the Duterte administration aimed to reduce poverty and improve living standards, particularly in rural and underserved urban areas. The program sought to leave a lasting legacy of improved infrastructure that would benefit future generations of Filipinos.

In conclusion, the "Build, Build, Build" program stands out as one of the most ambitious and impactful initiatives of President Duterte's administration. By prioritizing infrastructure spending and addressing the historical neglect of this sector, the program not only fostered economic growth but also aimed to enhance the quality of life for millions of Filipinos. As the nation moves forward, the achievements of the "Build, Build, Build" program will continue to shape the Philippines' infrastructure landscape, providing a foundation for sustainable growth and development in the years to come.



Key Infrastructure Projects and Their Impact

Key infrastructure projects undertaken during Rodrigo Roa Duterte's presidency represent a significant aspect of his administration's legacy, particularly through the "Build, Build, Build" program. This ambitious initiative aimed to enhance the Philippines' infrastructure landscape, addressing long-standing issues that hampered economic growth and accessibility. With an unprecedented investment of over P6 trillion over six years, the Duterte administration prioritized infrastructure spending, raising it to an average of 5.14 percent of GDP, a marked increase compared to previous administrations. The results of these investments are evident in the extensive developments in transportation, education, and public utilities, which have transformed daily life for many Filipinos.

The construction of new roads, bridges, and school facilities stands out as one of the most tangible impacts of this infrastructure push. The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), under Secretary Mark Villar, reported the completion of 145,000 classrooms, 2,000 school buildings, and 5,555 bridges, along with 26,500 kilometers of roads and expressways. These projects not only improved accessibility for remote communities but also facilitated trade and commerce, contributing to a more robust economy. The ripple effect of these developments was felt across various sectors, enhancing the quality of education and promoting regional development.

Transportation modernization was another critical element of Duterte's infrastructure agenda, spearheaded by the Department of Transportation (DOTr) under Secretary Art Tugade. The expansion of RoRo (roll-on/roll-off) shipping routes increased from 120 in 2016 to 181 by 2020, significantly enhancing inter-island connectivity. In addition, the com-

pletion of over 200 airport projects and improvements to existing terminals, such as NAIA, which became one of the most improved airports globally, contributed to a more efficient travel experience for both domestic and international passengers. These advancements not only improved the logistics of moving goods and people but also positioned the country as a more attractive destination for tourism and investment.

The impact of these infrastructure projects can also be seen in the enhanced capacity for disaster response and management. With the establishment of more resilient infrastructure, the Philippines, a country frequently affected by natural disasters, is better equipped to handle emergencies. The construction of new lighthouses and seaports has improved maritime safety and security, making it easier to coordinate disaster relief efforts. These projects reflect a forward-thinking approach to infrastructure that considers not just immediate needs but also long-term sustainability and resilience.

In conclusion, the key infrastructure projects initiated during Duterte's administration have had a profound impact on the Philippines, contributing to economic growth, improving public services, and enhancing the overall quality of life. While challenges remain, the groundwork laid by the "Build, Build, Build" program has set the stage for future development, demonstrating the importance of infrastructure as a pillar of national progress. As the country moves forward, the lessons learned from these initiatives will be crucial in shaping a more prosperous and sustainable future for all Filipinos.



Comparison of Infrastructure Spending Across Administrations

The comparison of infrastructure spending across various administrations reveals significant trends and shifts in fiscal priorities, particularly during Rodrigo Roa Duterte's presidency. Historically, infrastructure investment in the Philippines has fluctuated, with previous administrations allocating limited resources relative to the country's needs. For instance, under Fidel Ramos, the average infrastructure spending was approximately 1.7 percent of GDP, which was slightly lower during Joseph Estrada's tenure at 1.62 percent. Gloria Arroyo's administration maintained an average of 1.5 percent, while Benigno Aquino III managed to raise it to 2.7 percent. These figures illustrate a modest commitment to infrastructure development prior to Duterte, highlighting a longstanding challenge in addressing the country's infrastructure deficits.

In stark contrast, Duterte's administration marked a transformative period in infrastructure spending, particularly through the "Build, Build, Build" program spearheaded by Department of Public Works and Highways Secretary Mark Villar. Under Duterte, infrastructure investment skyrocketed to an average of 5.14 percent of GDP, significantly surpassing the expenditures of his predecessors. Over six years, the Duterte administration allocated more than P6 trillion to infrastructure projects, underscoring a decisive shift in policy aimed at addressing the infrastructure gap. This unprecedented financial commitment translated into tangible outcomes, including the construction of 145,000 classrooms, 2,000 school buildings, 5,555 bridges, and an extensive network of roads and expressways totaling 26,500 kilometers.

The achievements under the "Build, Build, Build" initiative were not merely numerical; they fundamentally reshaped the country's infrastruc-

ture landscape. The Department of Transportation, led by Secretary Art Tugade, complemented these efforts with a focus on modernizing transportation systems. The expansion of Roll-On/Roll-Off (RoRo) shipping routes and the development of new airport terminals significantly improved the connectivity and efficiency of transportation within the archipelago. Notably, the revitalization of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) transformed it from one of the worst airports globally to one of the most improved by 2018. The administration also addressed critical gaps by completing over 200 airport projects, enhancing the overall travel experience for both domestic and international passengers.

Furthermore, the Duterte administration's approach to infrastructure spending was characterized by a commitment to accountability and efficiency. The introduction of laws aimed at reducing red tape and streamlining government processes facilitated faster project approvals and implementation. The enactment of the Ease of Doing Business Act allowed for more efficient navigation of bureaucratic hurdles, ultimately fostering a more conducive environment for infrastructure development. This systemic change not only boosted public confidence but also attracted private investments, demonstrating a successful model for public-private partnerships in infrastructure.

In conclusion, the comparison of infrastructure spending across different administrations illustrates a clear evolution in the Philippines' approach to development and modernization. Duterte's unprecedented commitment to infrastructure investment, marked by substantial financial allocations and effective project execution, set a new benchmark for future leaders. The tangible benefits of this approach are evident in the enhanced quality of life for Filipinos, improved transportation systems, and an invigorated economy, positioning the country for sustained growth in the years to come.



Chapter 4: Transportation Modernization

Improvements in Mass Transportation

Improvements in mass transportation have been a significant aspect of Rodrigo Duterte's administration, highlighting a commitment to modernize the country's infrastructure and enhance the mobility of its citizens. Under the leadership of Secretary Art Tugade at the Department of Transportation (DOTr), the government undertook numerous initiatives aimed at making mass transit safer, more reliable, and accessible to the Filipino populace. This transformation was not only about infrastructure but also about improving the overall travel experience for commuters across the nation.

One of the hallmark achievements of Duterte's transportation modernization efforts was the expansion of the Roll-on/Roll-off (RoRo) shipping routes. The number of routes increased from 120 in 2016 to 181 by 2020, facilitating greater connectivity for vehicles and goods across the archipelago. This expansion not only improved logistics but also provided more options for travelers, contributing to a more integrated transportation network. The targeted addition of 41 new routes aims to service 325 ships and accommodate up to 4.8 million vehicles, thereby enhancing the country's maritime transport capabilities.

In addition to maritime improvements, significant investments were made in airport infrastructure. More than 200 airport projects were completed, alongside upgrades to major facilities such as Mactan, Clark, Ormoc, and Kalibo. The revival of the Bicol Airport after an 11-year hiatus is a notable example of how the administration sought to revitalize underutilized assets. Furthermore, the enhancement of the Ninoy

Aquino International Airport (NAIA) transformed it from one of the worst-rated airports globally to the most improved by 2018, demonstrating a commitment to elevating the standards of air travel in the Philippines.

The administration's focus on transportation also extended to the ambitious project of constructing a subway along EDSA, the Philippines' primary thoroughfare. This initiative represents a significant leap towards modernizing urban transit, aimed at alleviating the perennial traffic congestion that plagues Metro Manila. The introduction of night-rated airports, which increased from 14 in 2016 to 20 by mid-2021, further illustrates the drive towards expanding operational capabilities and improving service delivery in the aviation sector.

Overall, the improvements in mass transportation during Duterte's presidency exemplify a strategic approach to infrastructure development that aligns with the broader goals of the Build, Build, Build program. By addressing critical bottlenecks in transportation, the administration has laid the groundwork for a more efficient and accessible transit system, ultimately contributing to the economic growth and mobility of the Filipino people. These advancements not only reflect a commitment to modernity but also enhance the quality of life for citizens, making mass transportation a cornerstone of Duterte's legacy.



Development of Airport and Seaport Projects

The development of airport and seaport projects during Rodrigo Duterte's presidency marked a significant transformation in the Philippines' infrastructure landscape, resonating with his broader "Build, Build, Build" initiative. This initiative aimed to modernize the country's infrastructure to support economic growth, improve connectivity, and enhance the overall quality of life for Filipino citizens. Under the leadership of Department of Transportation Secretary Art Tugade, a comprehensive approach was taken to upgrade existing facilities and expand transportation networks, both in the air and at sea. The results of these efforts contributed to making the Philippines a more accessible and competitive player in the global economy.

One of the most notable achievements was the completion of over 200 airport projects, which significantly improved air travel safety and efficiency. Noteworthy among these projects were the new terminals at Mactan, Clark, Ormoc, and Kalibo, all designed to accommodate increasing passenger volumes and enhance the travel experience. The revival of Bicol Airport after an 11-year delay stands out as a symbol of progress, demonstrating the administration's commitment to addressing long-standing infrastructure gaps. Furthermore, the increase in night-rated airports, from 14 in 2016 to 20 by mid-2021, expanded operational capacity and improved service availability, especially for regional destinations.

In parallel, the development of seaports was equally transformative, with the completion of approximately 400 port projects. The expansion of Roll-on/Roll-off (RoRo) shipping routes from 120 to 181 between 2016 and 2020 facilitated increased trade and enhanced connectivity among

the islands. This improvement was crucial for an archipelagic nation like the Philippines, as it allowed for a more efficient movement of goods and services, thereby bolstering local economies and supporting the livelihoods of many Filipinos. The targeted completion of additional routes aims to service an even greater number of ships and vehicles, further solidifying the Philippines' maritime framework.

Modernization efforts also extended to the enhancement of existing transportation systems, such as the notable upgrades made to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA). Once ranked among the worst airports globally, NAIA transformed into the most improved airport by 2018, a testament to the administration's focus on raising operational standards. This included not only infrastructural improvements but also the eradication of corrupt practices, such as the notorious "laglag bala" extortion scheme, which plagued travelers and tarnished the airport's reputation. These changes fostered a renewed sense of trust among international travelers and improved the overall perception of the Philippines as a travel destination.

The comprehensive approach to airport and seaport development under Duterte's administration exemplifies a critical aspect of his legacy. By prioritizing infrastructure modernization, the government addressed both immediate transportation needs and long-term economic aspirations. The emphasis on collective growth through improved infrastructure has paved the way for increased tourism, trade, and investment, ultimately contributing to the Philippines' status as one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia. As these projects continue to evolve, they are expected to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the nation, ensuring that the benefits of development reach all Filipinos.



The Role of Department of Transportation in Modernization

The Department of Transportation (DOTr) played a pivotal role in the modernization of the Philippines during President Rodrigo Duterte's administration. This subchapter explores how the department, under Secretary Arthur Tugade, initiated transformative projects aimed at enhancing the country's transportation infrastructure and improving the overall mobility of its citizens. This modernization was not merely about upgrading facilities; it was about creating a robust framework that supports economic growth, eases congestion, and provides safe and reliable transportation options.

One of the significant achievements of the DOTr was the expansion of the Roll-on/Roll-off (RoRo) shipping routes. In 2016, the number of RoRo routes stood at 120, servicing 223 ships and accommodating 2.8 million vehicles. By 2020, this number increased to 181 routes, targeting an additional 41 routes to service 325 ships and 4.8 million vehicles. This expansion not only facilitated better inter-island connectivity but also empowered local economies by making trade and movement of goods more efficient. Such improvements in maritime transport reflect a strategic approach to bolster the logistics sector, thereby contributing to the overall economic landscape of the nation.

On land, the DOTr's efforts were equally commendable. The establishment of new airport terminals in Mactan, Clark, Ormoc, and Kalibo, along with the revival of Bicol Airport after an 11-year delay, showcased the government's commitment to enhancing air travel. The increase in night-rated airports, from 14 in 2016 to 20 by mid-2021, further contributed to improving accessibility and safety for both domestic and international travelers. Notably, the transformation of Ninoy Aquino In-

ternational Airport (NAIA) from one of the worst to the most improved airports globally by 2018 underscored the effectiveness of these initiatives, as did the eradication of the notorious "laglag-bala" extortion scheme.

The modernization agenda also encompassed ambitious projects like the construction of a subway along EDSA, which had long been a dream for urban commuters. Such infrastructure developments not only alleviate traffic congestion but also promote the use of public transport, making it a viable option for many Filipinos. The DOTr's comprehensive approach, which included more than 200 airport projects and 400 seaport enhancements, reflects a multi-faceted strategy to modernize transportation in a country where traffic and public transport challenges have long hindered economic progress.

The impact of the DOTr's modernization efforts extends beyond infrastructure; it intertwines with the broader economic objectives set forth under Duterte's administration. By enhancing transportation systems, the DOTr contributes to the "Build, Build, Build" program, which emphasizes the importance of infrastructure in sustaining economic growth. The investments made in transportation not only generate immediate employment opportunities but also foster long-term economic stability by improving the efficiency of goods and services movement across the archipelago.

In conclusion, the Department of Transportation under Secretary Arthur Tugade has been instrumental in the modernization of the Philippines. Through significant expansions in maritime, air, and land transport, the DOTr has laid down the groundwork for a more connected and accessible nation. These initiatives illustrate a strategic vision aimed at improving the lives of everyday Filipinos while stimulating economic growth, reinforcing Duterte's legacy as a president committed to progress and modernization.



Chapter 5: Education Initiatives

The Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act

The Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act represents a landmark achievement in Rodrigo Duterte's administration, reflecting a commitment to enhancing educational opportunities for all Filipinos. Signed into law on August 3, 2017, this legislation aims to provide equitable access to quality higher education by eliminating tuition fees for students in state universities and colleges (SUCs) and local universities and colleges (LUCs). By institutionalizing free higher education, the act ensures that financial barriers do not impede the pursuit of academic excellence, thereby fostering a more educated and skilled workforce that can contribute to the nation's development.

This initiative is particularly significant in a country where access to quality education has historically been limited by socio-economic factors. The act not only abolishes tuition fees but also introduces various financial assistance programs, including the Tertiary Education Subsidy (TES) and a Student Loan Program. These provisions are designed to support students from low-income families, ensuring that they have the necessary resources to succeed in their academic endeavors. As a result, by 2020, approximately 1.6 million students were benefiting from these educational provisions, marking a 36 percent increase from the previous year.

In addition to promoting free higher education, the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act also encompasses the Free Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) initiative. Recognizing the

diverse pathways to success, this aspect of the legislation provides students with opportunities to acquire technical skills that are highly relevant in today's job market. By emphasizing both academic and vocational training, the act aims to equip Filipinos with a broad range of skills, thereby enhancing their employability and readiness for the workforce.

The impact of this legislation extends beyond individual students; it has the potential to drive economic growth and development on a national scale. A more educated populace is better positioned to innovate, adapt, and respond to the demands of a rapidly changing global economy. By investing in education, the Duterte administration has laid the groundwork for a more competitive workforce that can contribute to the Philippines' position as one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia. This focus on quality education aligns with Duterte's broader vision of sustainable development through the empowerment of the Filipino people.

In summary, the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act is a cornerstone of Duterte's legacy, reflecting a transformative approach to education in the Philippines. By prioritizing access to quality higher education and supporting diverse educational pathways, this legislation not only addresses immediate financial barriers but also fosters long-term socio-economic development. As the nation continues to evolve, the implications of this act will resonate through generations, shaping the future of Filipino society and its contributions to the global community.



Impact of Free College Education on Filipino Students

The implementation of free college education in the Philippines, a hallmark achievement of President Rodrigo Duterte's administration, has had a profound impact on Filipino students and the broader education system. With the enactment of the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act in 2017, the government aimed to expand access to higher education, providing a pathway for students who previously faced significant financial barriers. By 2020, approximately 1.6 million students benefitted from this initiative, marking a 36% increase from the previous year. This surge in enrollment not only reflects a newfound opportunity for many but also signifies a shift in societal attitudes toward education as a fundamental right.

The direct benefits of free college education extend beyond mere access; they encompass the overall enhancement of educational quality and equity. By alleviating the financial burdens associated with tuition fees, students from low-income families can pursue degrees without the constant stress of debt accumulation. This initiative has empowered a diverse range of students, including those from marginalized communities, to aspire and strive for higher educational attainment. As a result, the demographic landscape of higher education is gradually diversifying, fostering a more inclusive environment that encourages varied perspectives and experiences.

Furthermore, the educational reforms under Duterte's administration have stimulated economic growth by cultivating a more skilled workforce. With greater access to quality higher education, students are better equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for the job market. This is particularly crucial in a rapidly evolving global economy where

employers seek graduates who can adapt to new challenges and technologies. The investment in education, through financial assistance and scholarships, aligns with the government's broader economic goals, ensuring that the youth can contribute effectively to national development and innovation.

The ripple effects of free college education also resonate within the community and family structures. As students pursue higher education, the potential for upward mobility increases, leading to improved living standards for families. Educated individuals often become role models, inspiring younger generations to aspire for academic and professional success. This shift not only enhances individual prospects but also promotes a culture of education within communities, reinforcing the idea that education is vital for personal and social advancement.

In conclusion, the impact of free college education on Filipino students is multifaceted, significantly transforming the educational landscape and societal dynamics. Through increased access and equity in higher education, the Duterte administration has laid the groundwork for a more educated and skilled workforce, paving the way for economic growth and community development. As the nation continues to navigate the complexities of the modern world, the importance of investing in education remains paramount, ensuring that every Filipino has the opportunity to thrive and contribute to the country's progress.



Broader Implications for the Education System

The broader implications for the education system during Rodrigo Duterte's presidency are significant, particularly in the context of his major achievement of expanding access to education through the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act. This landmark legislation, signed into law in 2017, provided free college education to students enrolled in state universities and colleges (SUCs) and local universities and colleges (LUCs). By 2020, approximately 1.6 million students were benefiting from this initiative, marking a 36 percent increase from the previous year. This expansion not only alleviated the financial burden on families but also aimed to enhance the overall quality of higher education in the Philippines.

Duterte's administration also prioritized technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as a means to equip the workforce with essential skills for a rapidly changing job market. The inclusion of various financial assistance programs and scholarships under the education reform further diversified the opportunities available to students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. By institutionalizing these initiatives, Duterte's government aimed to create a more equitable education system where all Filipinos could access quality education, regardless of their financial status.

The impact of these educational reforms extends beyond individual students to the broader economy. An educated workforce is crucial for driving economic growth, particularly in a country that aspires to be one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia. By investing in education, the Duterte administration sought to address the skills gap in various industries, ensuring that graduates were not just employable but also equipped

to contribute to the country's development. This proactive approach is expected to yield long-term benefits, as a skilled labor force is essential for attracting foreign investments and fostering innovation.

Moreover, the massive infrastructure projects under the "Build, Build, Build" program complement these educational initiatives by creating better access to educational institutions. The construction of new classrooms and school buildings, as well as improvements in transportation infrastructure, facilitates easier commutes for students, thereby increasing enrollment rates. The government's emphasis on modernizing transportation systems ensures that students can reach their educational institutions safely and efficiently, further promoting higher attendance and retention rates.

In conclusion, the broader implications of Duterte's educational policies reflect a comprehensive strategy to uplift the Philippines through human capital development. By focusing on expanding access to higher education and technical training, the administration has laid the groundwork for a more skilled and educated populace. This approach not only addresses immediate educational needs but also aligns with long-term economic goals, creating a ripple effect that can lead to sustained national progress. As these reforms continue to unfold, their influence on both individuals and society as a whole will be critical in shaping the future of the Philippines.



Chapter 6: Foreign Policy Shifts

The Pivot to China: Strategy and Implications

The Philippines' pivot to China marks a significant shift in the country's foreign policy under President Rodrigo Duterte, reflecting a strategic alignment that seeks to balance economic growth with geopolitical considerations. This pivot is rooted in the recognition of China's growing influence in the region and the potential benefits of closer economic ties. Duterte's administration has embraced this relationship, viewing it as an opportunity to secure investments, infrastructure development, and trade partnerships that could bolster the Philippine economy and enhance its global standing.

One of the primary implications of this pivot is the influx of Chinese investments in various sectors, including infrastructure, energy, and telecommunications. Through initiatives like the "Build, Build, Build" program, the Duterte administration has leveraged Chinese financing to fund critical infrastructure projects. This approach has allowed the government to address long-standing deficiencies in infrastructure, a key factor in the Philippines' economic growth trajectory. The collaboration with China has resulted in significant projects, such as bridges, roads, and rail systems, aimed at improving connectivity and accessibility across the archipelago, thereby facilitating trade and investment.

However, the pivot to China has not been without its controversies. Critics argue that closer ties with Beijing could compromise the Philippines' sovereignty and lead to increased dependence on China. Concerns over territorial disputes in the South China Sea have been a focal point

of this debate. While Duterte has sought to maintain a diplomatic approach to these tensions, the balance between fostering economic cooperation and safeguarding national interests remains a complex challenge. The administration's ability to navigate these waters will significantly impact the Philippines' long-term security and diplomatic relationships, particularly with traditional allies like the United States.

Moreover, this strategic reorientation has broader implications for the Philippines' participation in regional and global dynamics. By aligning more closely with China, the Philippines may find itself playing a pivotal role in the evolving geopolitical landscape of Southeast Asia. The country's growing relationship with China could enable it to become a significant player in regional initiatives, such as the Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to enhance trade and investment connectivity across Asia. This positioning could provide the Philippines with leverage in negotiations and partnerships that benefit its economic ambitions.

In summary, Duterte's pivot to China encapsulates a transformative phase in Philippine foreign policy, characterized by a pragmatic approach to economic development through strategic partnerships. While the potential benefits of increased investment and infrastructure development are evident, the implications for national sovereignty, security, and international relations require careful consideration. As the Philippines continues to navigate its role in a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape, the outcomes of this pivot will shape the nation's future trajectory and its standing in the global community.



Balancing Relations with the United States

Balancing relations with the United States has been a crucial aspect of Rodrigo Duterte's presidency, particularly as he navigated a complex geopolitical landscape marked by shifting alliances and domestic priorities. The Philippines has a long-standing history with the United States, characterized by military and economic ties established during the colonial period and continuing through the modern era. However, under Duterte's administration, a distinct pivot towards China emerged, prompting discussions on how to maintain a healthy relationship with Washington while pursuing a more independent foreign policy.

Duterte's approach to foreign policy has often been described as balancing act, where he sought to strengthen ties with China without completely alienating the United States. This strategy was evident in various diplomatic engagements and bilateral agreements. For instance, Duterte's administration successfully negotiated the return of the Balangiga bells, a historical artifact that had been taken by American soldiers. This act was symbolic of the Philippines asserting its sovereignty and was welcomed by both the Filipino public and international observers as a positive step in re-establishing national pride and historical justice without compromising the country's alliance with the U.S.

While pursuing closer relations with China, Duterte also emphasized the importance of maintaining robust defense ties with the United States. The Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), which allows for increased U.S. military presence and infrastructure development in the Philippines, was crucial in this regard. This agreement not only enhances the Philippines' defense capabilities but also serves as a deterrent against potential aggressions in the region, particularly concerning mar-

itime disputes in the South China Sea. By fostering military cooperation, Duterte aimed to reassure both domestic and international stakeholders of the Philippines' commitment to its defense obligations.

Moreover, the Duterte administration sought to leverage its relationship with the U.S. to garner economic support and investment. The Philippines has been a beneficiary of various U.S. development assistance programs aimed at strengthening infrastructure, education, and health care. By balancing relations with the U.S. while courting investment from China, Duterte aimed to stimulate economic growth in the Philippines, thereby addressing domestic challenges such as poverty and unemployment. This dual approach allowed the administration to harness the benefits of foreign investment while ensuring that the Philippines remained an active player in regional geopolitics.

The challenges of balancing relations with the United States are further complicated by the domestic implications of Duterte's foreign policy. Critics argue that a pivot towards China may undermine the Philippines' longstanding commitments to democratic values and human rights, especially amidst concerns over extrajudicial killings and authoritarian tendencies. Nevertheless, Duterte's administration has maintained that an independent foreign policy is essential for national sovereignty and self-determination. As his presidency comes to a close, the legacy of balancing relations with the United States will likely be evaluated in the context of the broader geopolitical dynamics in the Asia-Pacific region, with implications for future administrations and the Philippine people's aspirations for progress and stability.



The Return of the Balangiga Bells: A Symbolic Achievement

The return of the Balangiga Bells to the Philippines marks a significant milestone in the nation's historical narrative, transcending mere artifact repatriation to embody a powerful symbol of national pride and resilience. These bells, which were taken by American troops as war trophies following the Balangiga massacre in 1901, represent not only a painful chapter in Philippine history but also a testament to the enduring spirit of Filipinos. The successful negotiation for their return under President Rodrigo Duterte's administration stands as a reflection of the Philippines' evolving stance on its historical grievances and its quest for justice and recognition on the global stage.

The Balangiga Bells have long been a poignant reminder of the struggle against colonial rule and the sacrifices made by Filipinos in their pursuit of independence. Their seizure during the Philippine-American War was part of a broader narrative of oppression and resistance, and the bells became a rallying point for those advocating for historical acknowledgment and reparative justice. By reclaiming these significant artifacts, the Duterte administration not only addressed a long-standing demand from the Filipino people but also reinforced a narrative of sovereignty and dignity that resonates deeply within the national consciousness.

The diplomatic efforts that led to the return of the Balangiga Bells were emblematic of Duterte's independent foreign policy approach, which sought to balance relations between major powers like the United States and China. By leveraging historical grievances, Duterte was able to foster a renewed dialogue with the U.S., resulting in the bells' eventual return after more than a century. This achievement not only underscores the Philippines' diplomatic agency but also signifies a broader commitment

to addressing historical injustices, something that is often overlooked in international relations.

Moreover, the return of the bells has cultural and educational implications for the Philippines. They now serve as a vital link to the past, reminding future generations of the struggles endured in the fight for freedom. The bells are expected to be displayed in a prominent location, where they can educate the public about the rich history of resistance against colonialism and the importance of cultural heritage. This act of repatriation thus becomes a powerful tool for national identity formation and cultural preservation, highlighting the significance of history in shaping contemporary Filipino society.

In conclusion, the return of the Balangiga Bells stands as a symbolic achievement for President Duterte's administration, reflecting not only the successful navigation of complex international relations but also the importance of addressing historical wounds. This event encapsulates a broader narrative of healing and reconciliation, serving as a reminder of the strength and resilience of the Filipino people. As the nation moves forward, the bells will continue to resonate as a powerful symbol of sovereignty, cultural pride, and the ongoing journey toward justice and recognition for historical grievances.



Chapter 7: Governance and Bureaucratic Reform

Reducing Red Tape: The Ease of Doing Business Act

Reducing bureaucratic hurdles has been a significant focus of Rodrigo Duterte's administration, particularly through the implementation of the Ease of Doing Business Act (RA No. 11032). This legislation was designed to streamline processes within the government, making it easier for both local and foreign investors to navigate the often-complex regulatory landscape of the Philippines. By mandating that government agencies respond to public requests within 15 days, the Act established a more efficient framework that reduces the time and effort required to secure necessary permits and licenses. This commitment to efficiency was a cornerstone of Duterte's vision to make the Philippines an attractive destination for investment.

Prior to the enactment of the Ease of Doing Business Act, the Philippines ranked relatively low in the World Bank's Doing Business Report, highlighting the challenges faced by entrepreneurs. However, under Duterte's leadership, the country's rank improved significantly, moving from 144th in 2019 to 95th in 2020. This dramatic shift underscores the effectiveness of the reforms implemented to reduce red tape. The revised business permit and licensing standards, developed collaboratively by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), facilitated compliance

among local government units (LGUs) and enhanced the overall business climate.

One of the notable achievements of the Ease of Doing Business Act was the introduction of the Central Business Portal (CBP), launched on January 28, 2021. This online platform adopted a whole-of-government approach, integrating various agencies like the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) to streamline business registration processes. The CBP significantly reduced the average processing time for registering corporations from 33 days to just 7 days. This remarkable improvement not only alleviated the burden of endless queues in public offices but also showcased the government's commitment to providing world-class services to its constituents.

Furthermore, the administration's focus on reducing red tape has been instrumental in fostering economic growth. More than 7.5 million business establishments were registered between 2017 and June 2021, reflecting a surge in entrepreneurial activity catalyzed by the new streamlined processes. The reduction of bureaucratic obstacles has enabled businesses to operate more efficiently, ultimately contributing to job creation and economic development across the nation. The positive impact of these reforms is evident in the increasing number of investments and the overall resilience of the Philippine economy.

In conclusion, the Ease of Doing Business Act represents a critical component of Duterte's legacy, embodying his administration's commitment to governance reform and economic growth. By prioritizing the reduction of red tape, Duterte aimed to create a more favorable business environment, thereby enhancing the Philippines' competitive edge in the global market. As the nation continues to build on these foundational reforms, the focus on efficiency and transparency in government services will remain crucial in driving sustainable development and improving the quality of life for all Filipinos.



Enhancements in Government Service Delivery

Enhancements in government service delivery under President Rodrigo Duterte have marked a significant shift in how Filipinos interact with their government. One of the most notable reforms was the enactment of the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act (RA No. 11032) in 2018. This law mandated that government agencies respond to public requests and concerns within 15 days, thereby streamlining processes that previously bogged down citizens and businesses alike. By setting clear timelines for service provision, the Duterte administration aimed to foster a more responsive and accountable bureaucracy.

The establishment of the Central Business Portal (CBP) in 2021 further exemplified this commitment to efficiency. The CBP integrated various government services into a single platform, allowing users to register businesses online without the hassle of navigating multiple agencies. This initiative not only simplified business registration but also reduced the average processing time for corporations from 33 days to just seven. Such advancements are critical in a country where small and medium enterprises (SMEs) play a vital role in the economy, promoting job creation and innovation.

Another significant enhancement came through the Revised Business Permit and Licensing System (BPLS), which aimed to standardize and expedite the issuance of permits and licenses at the local government level. This system has seen increasing compliance among local government units (LGUs), resulting in over 7.5 million business establishments registered from 2017 to mid-2021. By minimizing bureaucratic hurdles, these reforms have not only improved service delivery but also enhanced the

investment climate, making the Philippines more attractive to local and foreign investors.

Duterte's administration also made strides in health care delivery through the Universal Health Care Law, which expanded insurance coverage to 100% of the population. This initiative aimed to ensure that all Filipinos have access to essential health services without facing financial hardship. The establishment of new treatment facilities and the expansion of vaccination programs during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the government's commitment to enhancing public health infrastructure and service delivery. These efforts were crucial in addressing the challenges posed by the pandemic and ensuring that health services remained accessible to all.

In summary, the enhancements in government service delivery during Duterte's presidency reflect a concerted effort to reduce red tape, improve efficiency, and make essential services more accessible to the Filipino people. By prioritizing reforms that streamline processes and expand access to services, the administration aimed to create a more responsive government that meets the needs of its citizens. These advancements are integral to understanding Duterte's legacy as they not only transformed the bureaucratic landscape but also set a foundation for ongoing improvements in public service in the Philippines.



The Central Business Portal and Business Registration Improvements

The Central Business Portal (CBP) represents a significant advancement in the Philippine government's approach to business registration, streamlining processes and promoting entrepreneurship. Launched on January 28, 2021, the CBP is a digital platform designed to unify various governmental agencies, including the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), and local government units (LGUs). This initiative reflects a whole-of-government approach, aiming to eliminate the bureaucratic hurdles that have long plagued business registration in the Philippines. By facilitating transactions through a single website, the CBP simplifies the process for entrepreneurs, making it more efficient and accessible.

Before the implementation of the CBP, businesses faced an arduous process that could take weeks, if not months, to complete. The average time for registering a corporation was around 33 days, which deterred many potential entrepreneurs from pursuing their business ideas. The introduction of the CBP has drastically reduced this timeframe to an average of just seven days. This remarkable improvement not only enhances the ease of doing business but also positions the Philippines as a more attractive destination for both local and foreign investments. Such efficiency is crucial for fostering a vibrant business climate that encourages innovation and competition.

The CBP is more than just a technological advancement; it embodies a strategic vision to empower the Filipino workforce and stimulate economic growth. By simplifying the registration process, the CBP enables entrepreneurs to focus on their core business activities rather than getting bogged down by red tape. This shift is essential in a country where

small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a pivotal role in job creation and economic development. The platform aligns with Duterte's broader goals of reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies and fostering an environment where business can thrive.

In conjunction with the CBP, the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act (RA 11032) has further facilitated improvements in public service delivery. This legislation mandates that all government agencies respond to public requests within a specified timeframe, thereby reinforcing the commitment to efficiency. The combination of the CBP and the EODB Act has resulted in a significant enhancement in the Philippines' ranking in the World Bank's Doing Business Report, showcasing the government's dedication to creating a more favorable business environment.

Ultimately, the Central Business Portal and the accompanying legislative measures mark a transformative shift in the Philippine business landscape. By prioritizing efficiency and accessibility, Duterte's administration has laid the groundwork for a more robust economy, poised to attract investment and foster entrepreneurship. These improvements are not just about reducing wait times; they are about empowering individuals and communities, providing them with the tools necessary to succeed and contribute to the nation's growth. As the country continues to navigate the complexities of the global economy, initiatives like the CBP will be crucial in ensuring that the Philippines remains competitive and resilient.



Chapter 8: Health Care Expansion

The Universal Health Care Law and Its Objectives

The Universal Health Care (UHC) Law, officially known as Republic Act No. 11223, is a landmark legislation that aims to provide comprehensive health care services to all Filipinos. Signed into law in February 2019, this initiative represents a significant shift in the country's approach to health care, ensuring that health services are accessible, affordable, and of high quality for every citizen. The UHC Law is part of the broader agenda of the Duterte administration to enhance the overall well-being of the population, especially in light of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It embodies the commitment to health as a fundamental human right and a vital component of national development.

One of the primary objectives of the UHC Law is to expand health insurance coverage to 100% of the population. Prior to this legislation, approximately 90% of Filipinos were covered by health insurance. The UHC Law ensures that even the remaining 10%—many of whom are from marginalized and low-income communities—now have access to insurance, significantly reducing the financial barriers to healthcare services. This expansion is crucial in promoting equity in health care, as it addresses disparities that often leave the most vulnerable populations underserved.

The UHC Law also emphasizes the importance of primary health care services, which serve as the foundation for a more effective health system. By strengthening primary health care, the UHC Law aims to shift the

focus from hospital-based care to preventive and promotive health services. This approach not only helps in managing health issues before they escalate but also fosters a healthier population overall. The establishment of more health facilities and the allocation of resources to enhance local health systems are essential strategies outlined in the law to achieve this goal.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the UHC Law has proven vital in facilitating a coordinated and comprehensive health response. The law mandates the creation of a Philippine Center for Disease Control and a Virology Institute, which are expected to bolster the country's preparedness and response to health emergencies. Additionally, the UHC Law supports the establishment of new treatment facilities, increasing the total capacity to handle health crises effectively. The pandemic has underscored the necessity for a robust health system, and the UHC Law is a step toward building resilience against future public health challenges.

Overall, the Universal Health Care Law is a pivotal achievement of the Duterte administration, reflecting a commitment to health for all Filipinos. Its objectives of universal coverage, enhanced primary health care, and strengthened health infrastructure are essential components of a sustainable health system. As the nation continues to navigate the complexities of health care delivery, the UHC Law stands as a foundational element in advancing the health and well-being of every Filipino, ensuring that no one is left behind in accessing vital health services.



Expansion of Health Insurance Coverage During the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges to health systems worldwide, including the Philippines. As the crisis unfolded, the Duterte administration took decisive steps to expand health insurance coverage, ensuring that more Filipinos had access to necessary medical services. Prior to the pandemic, the country had already made strides in health care reform, but the urgent need for comprehensive health insurance became glaringly apparent as the number of COVID-19 cases surged. The administration's commitment to universal health care aimed to provide a safety net for all citizens, enhancing the resilience of the health system during one of its most trying times.

Under the Universal Health Care (UHC) Law, enacted in 2019, the government aimed to expand insurance coverage from 90 percent of the population to 100 percent. This ambitious goal was particularly crucial as the pandemic exacerbated health inequalities, leaving vulnerable populations at greater risk. The implementation of the UHC Law meant that citizens could access a wide range of health services without the burden of excessive out-of-pocket expenses. The pandemic served as a catalyst for accelerating the full implementation of this law, highlighting its importance in safeguarding public health.

In response to the crisis, the government not only ramped up health insurance coverage but also increased funding for health facilities and services. By establishing new treatment centers and enhancing existing ones, the administration aimed to fortify the country's health infrastructure. The pandemic led to the creation of 9,000 new treatment facilities, with a capacity of 140,000 beds, showcasing the government's swift response to the escalating health crisis. This expansion was critical not only

for treating COVID-19 patients but also for ensuring that other health needs were addressed during the pandemic.

Moreover, the availability of COVID-19 vaccines was a pivotal aspect of the health insurance expansion strategy. With over 36 million vaccine doses arriving in the country, the government worked to ensure that all insured citizens had access to vaccinations. This effort was integral to controlling the virus's spread and protecting public health. The integration of vaccination efforts into the broader health insurance framework demonstrated the Philippines' commitment to a holistic approach to health care, where preventive measures complemented curative services. In conclusion, the expansion of health insurance coverage during the pandemic signified a critical turning point in the Philippines' approach to public health. The Duterte administration's initiatives aimed at universal health care not only responded to the immediate challenges posed by COVID-19 but also laid the groundwork for a more resilient health system in the future. As the nation continues to navigate the complexities of health care in the aftermath of the pandemic, the lessons learned from this period will be instrumental in shaping policies that prioritize the health and well-being of all Filipinos, ensuring that no one is left behind.



Establishment of New Health Infrastructure

The establishment of new health infrastructure during Rodrigo Roa Duterte's presidency marked a significant advance in the Philippines' healthcare system. With the implementation of the Universal Health Care (UHC) Law, access to medical services expanded substantially, aiming to provide comprehensive coverage for all Filipinos. This initiative was particularly crucial as the nation grappled with the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which underscored the urgent need for a robust health system. The government's commitment to enhancing health infrastructure not only sought to accommodate immediate healthcare needs but also aimed to lay the groundwork for long-term improvements in public health.

One of the critical aspects of the health infrastructure expansion was the strategic increase in the number of healthcare facilities. By the end of Duterte's term, over 9,000 new treatment facilities had been established, significantly boosting the country's healthcare capacity. These facilities contributed to a total bed capacity of approximately 140,000, which was crucial in managing the surge of COVID-19 cases. The rapid establishment of these facilities demonstrated the government's ability to respond swiftly to health emergencies and provided vital services to communities that previously faced significant barriers to accessing healthcare.

In addition to increasing the number of healthcare facilities, the Duterte administration focused on enhancing the quality of healthcare services available to Filipinos. The establishment of a Philippine Center for Disease Control and the construction of a Virology Institute represented a forward-thinking approach to disease management and prevention. These institutions aimed to bolster the Philippines' preparedness for fu-

ture health crises, ensuring that the country could effectively respond to both endemic and pandemic threats. Moreover, the government's investment in health infrastructure signaled a commitment to prioritizing public health, which is essential for any nation's resilience.

The expansion of health insurance coverage under the UHC Law was another pivotal achievement during this period. Coverage grew from 90 percent to a remarkable 100 percent of the population, ensuring that all Filipinos had access to necessary medical services without facing financial hardship. This significant increase in coverage provided a safety net for countless citizens, facilitating access to preventive care, treatment, and rehabilitation services. The law also aimed to eliminate the out-of-pocket expenses that often-deterred individuals from seeking medical attention, ultimately improving health outcomes and enhancing the overall quality of life.

In summary, the establishment of new health infrastructure during Duterte's presidency was characterized by an ambitious expansion of facilities, enhancement of service quality, and a comprehensive approach to health insurance coverage. These efforts not only addressed immediate healthcare needs during the pandemic but also laid a solid foundation for ongoing improvements in the Philippine healthcare system. As the country continues to navigate the complexities of public health, the initiatives set in motion during this administration will undoubtedly influence the trajectory of healthcare delivery for years to come.



Chapter 9: Crime and Law Enforcement Policies

Overview of Crime Reduction Strategies

The overview of crime reduction strategies during Rodrigo Roa Duterte's presidency reveals a multifaceted approach aimed at addressing the pervasive issue of crime in the Philippines. Central to these strategies was the administration's aggressive stance on illegal drugs, which was framed as a national crisis. The "war on drugs" became the hallmark of Duterte's law enforcement policy, characterized by a robust mobilization of police forces and the implementation of various community-based programs. The administration argued that such measures were necessary to restore peace and order, thereby fostering a safer environment for citizens to thrive.

In conjunction with the intensified anti-drug campaign, the Duterte administration sought to address crime through various social initiatives aimed at poverty alleviation and community development. Recognizing that socioeconomic factors contribute significantly to criminal activity, the government implemented programs designed to uplift marginalized communities. These initiatives included job creation, education, and healthcare access, which were seen as vital to reducing the likelihood of individuals engaging in criminal behavior. The integration of social services into crime prevention strategies represented a holistic approach that extended beyond mere enforcement measures.

Moreover, the administration emphasized the importance of modernizing law enforcement agencies to enhance their capability in crime prevention and investigation. This included the procurement of new equip-

ment, the establishment of more effective training programs, and the promotion of technology-driven solutions such as data analytics for crime mapping. By modernizing police operations, the Duterte administration aimed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of law enforcement, thereby creating a more responsive and accountable police force. However, the aggressive tactics employed in the war on drugs raised significant concerns regarding human rights and the rule of law. Reports of extrajudicial killings and police abuses during operations led to both domestic and international criticism. The administration faced accusations of violating human rights and undermining judicial processes. As a result, the implications of these strategies continue to fuel debates about the balance between maintaining public safety and ensuring the protection of individual rights, highlighting a contentious aspect of Duterte's legacy.

In summary, the crime reduction strategies implemented during Duterte's presidency encompassed a range of approaches, including aggressive law enforcement, community development, and modernization of police capabilities. While these strategies aimed to create a safer Philippines, they also sparked significant controversy due to concerns over human rights violations. The ongoing discourse surrounding these issues underscores the complexity of addressing crime and the need for balanced policies that prioritize both public safety and the protection of civil liberties.



Controversies Surrounding Extrajudicial Killings

Extrajudicial killings have emerged as one of the most contentious aspects of Rodrigo Duterte's presidency, casting a long shadow over his administration's achievements. While Duterte's government has been credited with significant economic reforms, infrastructure development, and social programs, the aggressive stance against crime, particularly through the war on drugs, has raised serious ethical and legal questions. This paradox of progress highlights the complex interplay between governance and human rights, drawing local and international scrutiny and sparking debates over the moral implications of state-sanctioned violence.

The campaign against illegal drugs was launched with the promise of restoring order and security, yet it has resulted in thousands of deaths, many of which remain uninvestigated. Critics argue that this strategy undermines the rule of law and disregards due process, as law enforcement agencies are accused of extrajudicial actions without accountability. The Philippine National Police (PNP) has been at the forefront of these operations, with reports indicating that police often label victims as drug offenders without substantial evidence. This practice has not only eroded public trust in law enforcement but has also led to fears that the government may be prioritizing a narrative of success over human rights.

International reactions to the extrajudicial killings have been stark, with various human rights organizations and foreign governments condemning the actions as violations of human rights. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has taken a keen interest in the situation, leading to discussions about potential investigations into crimes against humanity. Duterte's administration faces the prospect of being held accountable for these actions, with calls for cooperation with the ICC's inquiries. This

creates a tension between the government's narrative of national security and the global expectations of human rights standards, complicating the Philippines' diplomatic relationships.

Domestically, the extrajudicial killings have sparked protests and movements advocating for justice and accountability. Families of victims and civil society organizations have mobilized, demanding investigations and reforms within law enforcement agencies. These grassroots movements reflect a segment of the population that prioritizes human rights and the rule of law, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach to governance that includes public safety without sacrificing fundamental liberties. This struggle illustrates the ongoing debate within the Philippines regarding the balance between security and human rights.

As the Duterte administration concludes its term, the legacy of extrajudicial killings remains a defining aspect of his presidency. While his government has achieved notable advancements in economic growth, infrastructure, and social services, the implications of these controversial policies weigh heavily on his overall legacy. The discourse surrounding extrajudicial killings serves as a critical reminder of the importance of accountability and the need for policies that protect both the rights of individuals and the security of the nation, ultimately shaping how future administrations will navigate issues of crime, governance, and justice.



The Impact of Law Enforcement Policies on Public Safety

Law enforcement policies play a crucial role in shaping public safety, particularly in the context of Rodrigo Duterte's administration in the Philippines. Under his presidency, the approach to crime and security was characterized by a combination of aggressive law enforcement tactics and widespread public support for initiatives aimed at reducing crime rates. However, this approach has been met with significant controversy and scrutiny, particularly regarding human rights implications and the methods employed to achieve these goals. The stark contrast between the intended outcomes of these policies and their real-world effects has sparked an ongoing debate about the balance between safety and civil liberties.

One of the most notable aspects of Duterte's law enforcement policies was the intensified campaign against illegal drugs, which was framed as a necessary response to a national crisis. The government claimed that the drug trade was deeply intertwined with crime and violence, necessitating a robust and immediate response. This campaign led to a drastic increase in police operations targeting suspected drug offenders, which proponents argued contributed to a decline in crime rates. Statistics from the government indicated a decrease in certain types of crime, creating a narrative that the administration was successfully restoring order and safety to the streets of the Philippines.

However, the aggressive nature of these policies raised serious ethical concerns, particularly with reports of extrajudicial killings and human rights abuses. Critics argued that the methods employed in the anti-drug campaign often disregarded due process and the rule of law, leading to the deaths of thousands of individuals, many of whom were not afforded

a fair trial. These actions drew condemnation both domestically and internationally, leading to calls for accountability and transparency within law enforcement agencies. The Philippine government found itself navigating a delicate balance between maintaining public safety and upholding fundamental human rights, a challenge that continues to resonate in discussions about the legacy of Duterte's presidency.

Moreover, the impact of law enforcement policies on public safety cannot be viewed in isolation from the broader context of governance and social stability. The perception of safety among citizens is often influenced by their trust in law enforcement agencies and the judicial system. While some segments of society expressed support for Duterte's tough stance on crime, others felt marginalized and fearful of a system that seemed to prioritize punitive measures over rehabilitation and community safety. This divide has implications for social cohesion and public trust in government institutions, which are essential components of a functioning democracy and effective governance.

In conclusion, the impact of law enforcement policies on public safety during Duterte's presidency presents a complex narrative that encompasses both achievements and failures. While the administration's efforts to combat crime and improve safety garnered significant support from certain sectors, they also prompted critical discussions about human rights and the ethical boundaries of law enforcement. As society continues to grapple with the consequences of these policies, it is essential to reflect on the lessons learned and consider pathways that promote both safety and justice, ensuring that the legacy of Duterte's administration contributes to a more equitable and secure future for all Filipinos.



Chapter 10: Environmental Policies and Sustainability

Environmental Initiatives During Duterte's Term

During Rodrigo Duterte's presidency, environmental initiatives played a crucial role in shaping the Philippines' approach to sustainability and climate resilience. Acknowledging the urgent need for environmental protection, the administration implemented various policies and programs aimed at addressing pressing ecological concerns. Notable among these initiatives was the intensified focus on reforestation efforts, particularly in the aftermath of natural disasters that highlighted the vulnerability of the Philippines to climate change. The government launched programs to restore degraded forest lands and enhance biodiversity, recognizing that healthy ecosystems are vital for both environmental stability and economic sustainability.

In addition to reforestation, Duterte's administration prioritized the management of waste and pollution, particularly in urban areas. The implementation of the National Solid Waste Management Program aimed at reducing waste generation and promoting recycling and composting. This program sought to address the critical issue of waste disposal, particularly in Metro Manila, where inadequate waste management systems have led to severe environmental degradation. The government's emphasis on waste management was complemented by initiatives to educate the public on sustainability practices, fostering a culture of environmental responsibility among citizens.

Climate change adaptation and disaster preparedness were also central to the Duterte administration's environmental agenda. The government established the Climate Change Commission, which was tasked with developing a comprehensive framework for climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. This included enhancing the resilience of vulnerable communities through improved infrastructure and early warning systems for natural disasters. The initiatives aimed not only to protect lives and property but also to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Philippines' natural resources in the face of increasingly severe climate-related events. Furthermore, Duterte's administration recognized the importance of preserving the country's marine resources. The government intensified efforts to combat illegal fishing and implemented policies to protect marine biodiversity, particularly in critical ecosystems such as coral reefs. Initiatives to promote sustainable fishing practices and the establishment of marine protected areas were integral to these efforts, reflecting a commitment to safeguarding the livelihoods of coastal communities while ensuring the health of marine ecosystems.

Overall, the environmental initiatives during Duterte's term represented a multifaceted approach to addressing the challenges of sustainability in the Philippines. By integrating reforestation, waste management, climate adaptation, and marine conservation strategies, the administration sought to promote a holistic understanding of environmental stewardship. These initiatives laid the groundwork for a more sustainable future, emphasizing the interconnectedness of ecological health and the well-being of Filipino communities. In doing so, they contributed to a broader narrative of progress that encompassed not only economic development but also the preservation of the Philippines' rich natural heritage.



Responses to Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness

Responses to climate change and disaster preparedness represent critical dimensions of governance that directly affect the well-being of citizens and the sustainability of the environment. Under the Duterte administration, a variety of initiatives were launched to address these pressing challenges. The government's approach emphasized a multi-faceted strategy that combined infrastructure development, community engagement, and legislative reforms, all aimed at strengthening the Philippines' resilience to natural disasters and the impacts of climate change.

One significant aspect of the Duterte administration's response to climate change was the integration of environmental considerations into the "Build, Build, Build" infrastructure program. By prioritizing projects that enhance disaster resilience, such as flood control systems and climate-resilient roads, the government aimed to mitigate the risks posed by natural disasters, which are frequent in the Philippines. This commitment to resilient infrastructure was evidenced by investments in projects designed to withstand the increasing severity of typhoons and flooding, reflecting a proactive stance on climate adaptation.

The administration also focused on enhancing disaster preparedness through the establishment of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) as a central coordinating body for disaster response. Under Duterte, the council implemented various policies and conducted regular drills to prepare communities for potential disasters. These efforts were complemented by the promotion of early warning systems and community-based disaster risk reduction strategies, empowering local governments and communities to take charge of their own disaster preparedness.

Legislation played a vital role in the government's climate change responses. The Duterte administration supported the enactment of the Climate Change Act and the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, which institutionalized a framework for addressing climate-related threats. These laws mandated a whole-of-government approach, encouraging collaboration among various sectors and levels of government to enhance the Philippines' overall capacity to respond to climate change and disasters. This framework facilitated the allocation of resources and the development of tailored strategies to address specific vulnerabilities faced by different regions.

Furthermore, the government emphasized public awareness and education as key components of disaster preparedness. Campaigns aimed at informing citizens about climate change, disaster risks, and safety protocols were initiated, fostering a culture of preparedness among the populace. By engaging communities in workshops and informational sessions, the administration sought to ensure that individuals were equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to respond effectively during emergencies.

In summary, the Duterte administration's responses to climate change and disaster preparedness were characterized by a comprehensive strategy that combined infrastructure development, legislative support, community engagement, and public education. These initiatives not only aimed to protect the environment but also to safeguard the lives and livelihoods of Filipinos in the face of increasing climate-related challenges. Through these efforts, the administration sought to lay a foundation for a more resilient and sustainable future for the country.



Evaluating the Effectiveness of Environmental Regulations

Evaluating the effectiveness of environmental regulations during Rodrigo Duterte's presidency is a critical aspect of understanding his legacy in the Philippines. Environmental regulations are designed to protect natural resources, reduce pollution, and promote sustainable development. During Duterte's administration, various initiatives were introduced to address pressing environmental issues, such as waste management, deforestation, and air quality. Evaluating these regulations requires a comprehensive analysis of their implementation, impact, and the challenges faced in achieving environmental sustainability.

One of the notable efforts during Duterte's term was the implementation of the National Solid Waste Management Program, which aimed to enhance waste segregation, collection, and disposal systems across the country. The government sought to address the growing problem of waste management, particularly in urban areas. However, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited public awareness, and local government capacity hindered the effective rollout of this program. Evaluating its effectiveness involves examining whether the program led to tangible improvements in waste management practices and reduced the environmental impact of waste disposal.

Another significant area of focus was the campaign against illegal logging and the protection of the country's forests. Duterte's administration emphasized the importance of reforestation and sustainable forest management in combating climate change and preserving biodiversity. The government launched initiatives to rehabilitate degraded forest lands and increase forest cover. Evaluating the effectiveness of these initiatives requires assessing the success of reforestation efforts, the enforcement of

logging regulations, and the extent to which these measures contributed to the overall health of the nation's forests.

Air quality improvement was also a priority, particularly in urban centers like Metro Manila. Regulations aimed at reducing vehicular emissions and promoting cleaner transportation options were introduced. The government sought to upgrade public transportation and encourage the use of electric vehicles. However, the effectiveness of these regulations can be evaluated through air quality monitoring data and public health outcomes. Analyzing whether these efforts led to significant reductions in air pollution and improved the quality of life for residents in affected areas is crucial for understanding the success of environmental policies.

Moreover, the Duterte administration faced criticism regarding its handling of environmental issues, particularly concerning the balance between economic development and environmental protection. The push for infrastructure projects under the "Build, Build, Build" program raised concerns about potential environmental degradation. Evaluating the effectiveness of environmental regulations in this context involves examining how well the government integrated environmental considerations into infrastructure planning and implementation. This includes assessing whether environmental impact assessments were conducted thoroughly and whether mitigation measures were effectively enforced.

In conclusion, evaluating the effectiveness of environmental regulations during Duterte's presidency requires a multifaceted approach that considers both the achievements and shortcomings of the administration's environmental policies. While there were notable initiatives aimed at improving waste management, protecting forests, and enhancing air quality, the challenges of implementation and balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability remain critical factors. A thorough evaluation will provide valuable insights into the successes and areas for improvement in the Philippines' ongoing quest for environmental resilience.



Chapter 11: Social Services and Community Development

Social Programs for Poverty Alleviation

Social programs aimed at poverty alleviation have been a focal point of the Duterte administration, reflecting a commitment to improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable sectors of society. The government recognized that poverty in the Philippines is multifaceted, requiring a range of interventions that address not only economic deprivation but also education, health care, and social welfare. Through various initiatives, the administration sought to create a safety net for low-income families while promoting sustainable development.

One significant program was the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), which provided conditional cash transfers to poor households. This program aimed to improve the health, nutrition, and education of children by requiring beneficiaries to meet certain conditions, such as regular health check-ups and school attendance. By incentivizing education and health, the 4Ps program not only alleviated immediate financial burdens but also invested in human capital development, laying the groundwork for long-term poverty reduction.

In addition to cash transfers, the government expanded access to free education, significantly impacting poverty alleviation efforts. The implementation of the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act allowed millions of Filipino students to pursue higher education without the financial constraints that often hinder educational attainment. By providing scholarships and financial assistance, this initiative aimed to break the cycle of poverty and empower individuals through education,

thereby enabling them to secure better job opportunities and improve their socio-economic status.

The administration also focused on healthcare access as a means of combating poverty. The Universal Health Care Law, which expanded insurance coverage to 100% of the population, was a crucial step in ensuring that all Filipinos could access essential health services without incurring catastrophic expenses. This initiative aimed to alleviate the financial burden of medical costs on low-income families, thereby preventing health-related poverty traps that can arise from high medical expenses. The establishment of new health facilities and the enhancement of existing services were integral to this effort.

Furthermore, the government implemented livelihood programs designed to provide skills training and entrepreneurship opportunities for the poor. These initiatives aimed to empower communities by enhancing their capacity to generate income through sustainable means. By equipping individuals with the necessary skills and resources, the administration sought to promote economic self-sufficiency, which is essential for long-term poverty alleviation. Collectively, these social programs reflect a comprehensive approach to addressing poverty, recognizing that economic growth must be inclusive and equitable to be truly effective.



Community Empowerment Initiatives

Community empowerment initiatives have emerged as a crucial element in the framework of Rodrigo Roa Duterte's presidency, reflecting a commitment to uplifting marginalized populations and fostering participatory governance. These initiatives have aimed to provide Filipinos with the tools, resources, and opportunities necessary to improve their lives and communities. By prioritizing local engagement and responsiveness, the Duterte administration sought to create an environment where citizens feel empowered to take an active role in shaping their futures.

One of the cornerstones of community empowerment during Duterte's term was the emphasis on local governance. The administration advocated for greater autonomy and capacity-building at the local level, enabling municipalities and barangays to tailor programs to their specific needs. Through the Department of the Interior and Local Government, various capacity-building programs were implemented, equipping local officials with the knowledge and skills to effectively manage resources and deliver essential services. This approach not only strengthened local governments but also fostered a sense of ownership among citizens regarding community development initiatives.

Additionally, various social programs were introduced to address pressing issues such as poverty and unemployment. The Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), which provided conditional cash transfers to low-income families, became a key initiative aimed at alleviating poverty and promoting education and health. By linking financial assistance to educational and health requirements, the program encouraged families to invest in the future of their children, establishing a foundation for long-term community upliftment. This initiative illustrated how target-

ed financial support could empower communities, breaking the cycle of poverty and promoting social mobility.

In the realm of education, the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act significantly expanded access to higher education, which is pivotal for community empowerment. By providing free tuition to students in state universities and colleges, the law enabled a larger segment of the population to pursue academic and vocational training. This move not only opened doors for individual advancement but also contributed to the overall skill enhancement of the workforce, equipping communities with the human capital necessary for sustainable development. Enhanced education opportunities are essential for empowering individuals to take charge of their economic futures and contribute to their communities.

Lastly, the administration's focus on infrastructure development through the "Build, Build, Build" program has laid the groundwork for community empowerment by improving access to essential services and economic opportunities. Upgrading roads, schools, and healthcare facilities has not only created jobs but also facilitated better connectivity and access to markets for local entrepreneurs. This infrastructure push has been crucial in fostering economic resilience at the community level, enabling residents to leverage improved facilities for their benefit. As a result, community empowerment initiatives during Duterte's presidency have not only aimed to uplift individuals but also sought to strengthen the socioeconomic fabric of the nation, fostering a more inclusive and participatory society.



Evaluating the Impact on Vulnerable Populations

Evaluating the impact of government policies on vulnerable populations is a crucial aspect of assessing any administration's legacy. In the context of Rodrigo Duterte's presidency, the ten pillars of progress, particularly in economic growth, infrastructure development, and social services, provide a nuanced picture of how these initiatives have affected the most marginalized sectors of society. While some policies have aimed to uplift vulnerable groups, it is essential to critically examine both the positive and negative consequences of these reforms on their lives.

One of Duterte's significant achievements is the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law, designed to lower income taxes for many Filipinos while raising funds for essential public services. However, the impact of this law on vulnerable populations has been mixed. While higher income earners benefitted from tax cuts, the increased excise taxes on fuel, sugar, and other goods disproportionately affected low-income families. The cost of living rose for these households, placing additional strain on their limited resources. Thus, while the TRAIN Law contributed to overall economic growth, its implementation highlighted the need for careful consideration of how tax policy affects those already struggling to make ends meet.

Infrastructure development, encapsulated in the "Build, Build, Build" program, has seen massive investments in roads, bridges, and classrooms. For vulnerable populations, improved infrastructure can lead to better access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. However, the execution of these projects has often raised concerns about displacement and the disruption of local communities. Many informal settlers and indigenous groups have faced eviction as development projects

take precedence, leading to a situation where the very populations targeted for upliftment may find themselves further marginalized. It is vital to ensure that infrastructure projects are inclusive and consider the rights and voices of these communities.

Education initiatives, particularly the implementation of free college education through the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, have created opportunities for many young Filipinos from disadvantaged backgrounds. This policy has significantly increased enrollment rates in state universities and colleges, enabling access to quality education that was previously out of reach for many. Nonetheless, the challenges of ensuring quality education and adequate support systems remain. Vulnerable students often face barriers such as transportation costs, lack of academic preparedness, and limited access to resources that can hinder their success in these institutions. Therefore, while the policy has the potential to transform lives, a comprehensive support system is essential to maximize its benefits.

The administration's focus on universal health care has expanded insurance coverage to nearly all Filipinos, significantly impacting vulnerable populations who previously lacked access to essential health services. This initiative is particularly crucial in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which highlighted the disparities in health care access and outcomes. However, the effectiveness of universal health care relies on the availability of facilities and services that cater to low-income communities. Despite the establishment of new treatment facilities, the distribution and quality of health care remain uneven, necessitating ongoing efforts to ensure that vulnerable populations receive the care they need, especially in rural and underserved areas.

In conclusion, while Duterte's presidency has introduced several initiatives aimed at improving the lives of vulnerable populations, the actual impact of these policies has varied. It is essential to recognize the complexities and trade-offs involved in governmental reforms. As the nation reflects on Duterte's legacy, a balanced evaluation of both the achieve-

ments and shortcomings of his administration will be crucial in informing future policies aimed at truly uplifting the most marginalized members of society. Ensuring that progress includes all Filipinos, particularly the vulnerable, must remain a priority for any government moving forward.



Chapter 12: Conclusion: The Ten Pillars of Duterte's Legacy

Summary of Major Achievements

The legacy of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte is encapsulated in several pivotal achievements that have significantly shaped the Philippines during his administration. Among these accomplishments, seven stand out as particularly transformative, allowing Duterte to assert that his presidency has had a lasting impact on the nation. These key initiatives span various sectors, including economic reform, infrastructure development, education, foreign policy, governance, health care, and crime reduction. Each of these achievements reflects a commitment to advancing the Philippines' global standing and improving the lives of its citizens.

One of the cornerstone achievements of Duterte's presidency is the comprehensive tax reform program, spearheaded by Finance Secretary Sonny Dominguez. The Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law, along with subsequent measures, not only provided significant income tax cuts for a majority of Filipinos but also generated substantial revenue to fund vital infrastructure and social services. This fiscal strategy contributed to the Philippines being recognized as one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia, with tax revenue reaching an all-time high as a percentage of GDP during Duterte's tenure. The reforms facilitated economic growth, enabling the government to allocate resources towards critical development projects.

Infrastructure development under the "Build, Build, Build" program represents another major achievement of Duterte's administration. Under the leadership of Department of Public Works and Highways Secretary

Mark Villar, infrastructure spending surged, reaching an average of 5.14 percent of GDP. Over P6 trillion was invested in infrastructure projects, resulting in the construction of thousands of classrooms, bridges, and roads. This ambitious program aimed to modernize the country's infrastructure and improve connectivity, thereby fostering economic growth and enhancing the quality of life for millions of Filipinos.

Transportation modernization, led by Department of Transportation Secretary Art Tugade, further complemented infrastructure efforts by ensuring safe and reliable mass transit. Significant advancements included the expansion of RoRo shipping routes, the completion of airport projects, and the improvement of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), which transformed it from one of the worst airports globally to one of the most improved by 2018. These developments not only enhanced domestic transportation but also bolstered the Philippines' attractiveness as a destination for international tourism and investment.

In the realm of education, Duterte's administration made substantial strides by implementing the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act, which provided free college education to 1.6 million students by 2020. This initiative expanded access to quality education and created opportunities for many young Filipinos to pursue higher education without financial burden. The promotion of educational equity was a significant focus, ensuring that education remained accessible to all, thus empowering the next generation of leaders and professionals.

The independent foreign policy pursued by Duterte also marked a notable shift in the Philippines' international relations, particularly with China and the United States. This strategic pivot allowed the country to engage with China while maintaining its historical ties with the U.S., including the successful return of the Balangiga bells. Furthermore, Duterte's governance approach focused on reducing bureaucratic red tape, improving government service delivery, and expanding universal health care coverage to 100 percent of the population. These multifaceted achievements collectively illustrate Duterte's complex legacy, char-

acterized by both progress and controversy, and underscore his significant impact on the Philippines' trajectory.



The Lasting Impact of Duterte's Policies

The policies implemented during Rodrigo Duterte's presidency have left a profound and lasting impact on the Philippines, shaping various sectors of society and governance. Among his most significant achievements, seven stand out, reflecting a commitment to economic growth, infrastructure development, education reform, and healthcare expansion. Each of these areas not only aimed to address immediate challenges but also sought to lay the groundwork for sustainable progress. This chapter will explore the enduring influence of these policies and their implications for the future of the nation.

Duterte's tax reform initiatives, notably the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law, have played a pivotal role in transforming the Philippine economy. By providing substantial income tax cuts for the majority of taxpayers while enhancing government revenue, these reforms facilitated increased public spending on infrastructure and social services. The economic momentum generated from these tax reforms positioned the Philippines as one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia during Duterte's tenure, fostering an environment conducive to investment and job creation. This financial foundation will continue to influence economic policies and growth trajectories long after his administration.

The "Build, Build, Build" program epitomizes Duterte's approach to infrastructure development. With an unprecedented investment of over P6 trillion, the administration prioritized building critical infrastructure, including roads, bridges, classrooms, and airports. The legacy of this program is visible in the improved connectivity and accessibility across the archipelago, which has the potential to bolster economic activities and enhance the quality of life for Filipinos. Future administrations will like-

ly build upon this infrastructural framework, recognizing its essential role in facilitating national development and economic resilience.

Education reform was another cornerstone of Duterte's policies, particularly through the implementation of the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act. By providing free college education to millions of students, the Duterte administration sought to democratize access to higher education and improve the skill set of the workforce. This initiative not only empowered individuals but also aimed to elevate the country's human capital, fostering a more educated populace equipped to meet the demands of a rapidly changing global economy. The long-term effects of this policy will manifest in a more competitive workforce and a society that values education as a pathway to progress.

Furthermore, the implementation of universal healthcare represents a significant shift in the country's approach to health services. By expanding insurance coverage to 100% of the population, Duterte's administration made strides toward achieving equitable access to healthcare, which is especially crucial in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The establishment of a Philippine Center for Disease Control and the construction of a Virology Institute signal a commitment to strengthening the country's health infrastructure. These developments will have lasting implications for public health and the nation's ability to respond to future health crises.

In conclusion, the policies enacted during Duterte's presidency have created a multifaceted legacy that continues to influence various aspects of Philippine society. From economic reforms to infrastructure and healthcare improvements, these initiatives reflect a vision of progress that has the potential to shape the nation for years to come. As the Philippines navigates its path forward, the foundational changes initiated during this period will serve as both a guide and a benchmark for future leadership, emphasizing the importance of sustained investment in the country's social and economic fabric.



Future Considerations for the Philippines

Future considerations for the Philippines require a nuanced understanding of the progress made during Rodrigo Roa Duterte's presidency, particularly his seven key achievements that aimed to elevate the nation's economic and social standing. As the country moves forward, it is essential to build upon the foundation laid by these initiatives while also addressing the challenges that lie ahead. This subchapter explores potential pathways for the Philippines to ensure sustained growth, stability, and inclusivity in the years to come.

The tax reform measures implemented under Duterte, notably the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Law, have transformed the fiscal landscape of the Philippines, making it one of the fastest-growing economies in Asia. Future considerations should focus on maintaining this momentum while ensuring that tax policies are equitable and promote sustainable development. Policymakers must prioritize transparency and public engagement to foster trust in the tax system, alongside ensuring that revenue generated is invested effectively in social services, infrastructure, and education.

Continuing the "Build, Build, Build" program, initiated by the Duterte administration, presents another critical area for future development. The infrastructure projects have significantly improved connectivity and accessibility across the archipelago. However, as the nation progresses, it is crucial to adopt sustainable practices that consider environmental impact while meeting the infrastructure needs of a growing population. The government should also explore public-private partnerships to leverage additional resources for ongoing and future infrastructure projects.

Transportation modernization has been a hallmark of Duterte's presidency, with significant advancements in mass transit systems and airport

facilities. Future considerations must involve further enhancing public transportation to alleviate congestion and reduce carbon emissions. Investments in smart transportation solutions, such as integrated ticketing systems and electric vehicle infrastructure, can improve efficiency and accessibility for all citizens. Additionally, continued focus on rural transportation networks will be vital to ensure that economic growth is inclusive and benefits all regions of the Philippines.

The educational reforms, particularly the introduction of free college education, have expanded access to higher learning for millions. Moving forward, the Philippines should prioritize quality improvements in education to ensure that the increased access translates into better outcomes for students. This includes investing in teacher training, curriculum development, and facilities. Moreover, vocational education and training programs should be enhanced to align with industry needs, ensuring that the workforce is equipped with the skills necessary for emerging job markets.

Lastly, the legacy of an independent foreign policy must be carefully navigated in the years ahead. The pivot towards China while maintaining strong ties with the United States has opened new avenues for trade and investment but has also raised concerns regarding national sovereignty and security. Future administrations should strive for a balanced foreign policy that prioritizes national interests, engages in regional cooperation, and fosters partnerships that promote economic growth while safeguarding the Philippines' sovereignty. As the nation looks to the future, embracing these considerations will be crucial in building on Duterte's legacy and ensuring a prosperous and inclusive Philippines for all.

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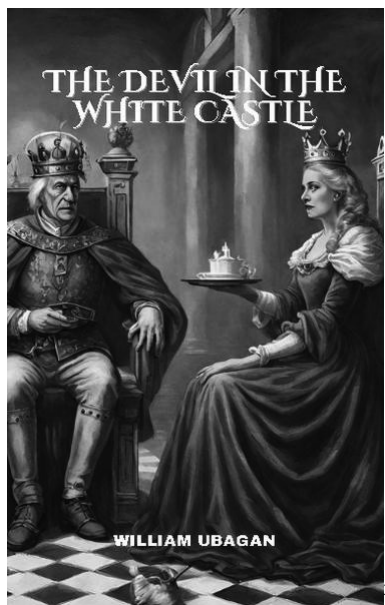
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Did you love *Duterte's Legacy: The Ten Pillars of Progress*? Then you should read *The Devil In The White Castle*¹ by WILLIAM UBAGAN!



In the land of Merryland, where promises of prosperity once echoed, "The Devil in the White Castle" unfolds a riveting tale of power, betrayal, and the resilient spirit of those who dare to defy corruption. At its center stands King Samboy, a charismatic leader whose rise to power entwines with the cunning Satana, a woman driven by insatiable greed.

As Samboy ascends the throne, the once-hopeful nation finds itself ensnared in a web of deceit. Satana's alliances with smugglers and the infiltration of corrupt officials into key positions plunge Merryland into a dark abyss. The farmers, who once flourished, witness their lands wither as the rulers prioritize personal gain over the welfare of the people.

1. <https://books2read.com/u/4N8XQ6>

2. <https://books2read.com/u/4N8XQ6>

"The Devil in the White Castle" delves into the manipulation of information as the rulers silence dissent through puppetry in the media. Journalists like Clara strive to unveil the truth, even as their efforts are met with threats and persecution. The erosion of press freedom becomes a chilling backdrop to the citizens' struggle for information.

The narrative takes a harrowing turn as the rulers extend their puppetry to the military and police. Colonel Rivera and Captain Rodriguez, once honorable figures, succumb to the influence, leading to the unjust downfall of the valiant Roy. His arrest and fabricated charges set the stage for a wider suppression of dissent within the ranks of protectors.

Amidst the shadows of oppression, a beacon of hope emerges. Alejandro and a group of courageous citizens rally against the rulers, utilizing social media and grassroots efforts to mount a bloodless revolution. Their journey unveils a damning video that could expose the rulers' darkest secrets.

"The Devil in the White Castle" weaves a tapestry of political intrigue and moral decay, exploring the consequences of unchecked power and the enduring fight for justice. As the nation teeters on the brink, the novel explores whether the collective will of the people can overcome the malevolence that threatens to consume Merryland. In this gripping tale, the struggle for freedom becomes a rallying cry, and the fate of a nation hangs in the balance.

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William Ubagan is a prolific book author and talented writer. With a passion for storytelling, he captivates readers with his engaging narratives and thought-provoking themes. William's unique writing style leaves a lasting impression, drawing readers into his imaginative worlds. His diverse range of literary works showcases his versatility and creative prowess. Whether it's a thrilling mystery, a heartfelt romance, or a gripping fantasy, William's books are sure to leave readers eager for more. With each new release, he continues to establish himself as a rising star in the literary world.

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